

Members

Sen. Harold Wheeler, Chairperson
Sen. Becky Skillman
Sen. Allie Craycraft
Sen. James Lewis
Rep. Markt Lytle
Rep. Dale Sturtz
Rep. Richard Mangus
Rep. Phyllis Pond



NATURAL RESOURCES STUDY COMMITTEE

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Authority: IC 2-5-5-1

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: July 25, 2000
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Sen. Harold Wheeler, Chairperson; Sen. Becky Skillman; Sen. James Lewis; Rep. Markt Lytle; Rep. Richard Mangus; Rep. Phyllis Pond.

Members Absent: Sen. Allie Craycraft; Rep. Dale Sturtz.

The Natural Resources Study Committee (Committee) was called to order at 10:15 a.m. Members and staff of the Committee were introduced to the public. Senator Wheeler (Chairman) stated that the issue of the sale, ownership, and possession of wild animals would be studied at a later meeting. The Chairman then called witnesses to propose topics to be studied by the Committee during the summer interim.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Al Schelker, Indiana Marine Trade Association, presented three issues for the Committee's consideration:

- 1) The time required for preparation of boat titles. The Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) prepares titles for other vehicles in not more than a few days but boat titles take 8-10 weeks to prepare.
- 2) IC 9-31-3-5(2). The BMV issued receipt provision of the 31 day temporary tag statute is unworkable in its present form.
- 3) Boat dealer plates should be easily attached and removed from a boat like temporary tags. Mr. Schelker would also like to use the 31 day temporary tags as dealer plates.

Senator James Merritt, District 31, asked the Committee to study creating a Department of Indiana Heritage. He has seen the need to combine different parts of state government that work with Indiana's history from his own personal experience. He has introduced this concept before and each year the bill becomes further refined. Last year he introduced SB 239-2000 and it passed out of the Senate and received a hearing in the House of Representatives.

Dick Mercier, Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable, presented two topics for the Committee's consideration:

- 1) Automated point of sale sporting licenses. HR 68-2000 asked for a feasibility study to be conducted. Surrounding states already have automated point of sale sporting licenses.
- 2) Endorse legislation concerning falconry and trapping. Last year the Committee recommended SB 139-2000.

Representative Robert Cherry, District 53, asked the Committee to examine the issue of timber theft in Indiana. People are coming in the middle of the night or going into secluded areas and stealing valuable timber. No conservation officers are currently assigned to work exclusively in the timber area. He would like to see one or two conservation officers added who would police the timber industry.

Ray Moistner, Indiana Hardwood Lumberman's Association, stated that timber theft is already illegal, but the offense is only a misdemeanor. Prosecutors are reluctant to spend much time prosecuting misdemeanors. He would like to have the law amended so that a second offense is elevated to a Class D felony.

John Seifert, President, Indiana Forestry & Woodland Owners Association, presented two areas of study for the Committee's consideration:

- (1) Enhancing the Classified Forest Program (CFP). The CFP has not been an attractive incentive in today's market (i.e. the value of timber and rural property for homes has increased). (Exhibit #1)²
- (2) Sustainable forestry initiative. Over the past five years the federal government has dramatically reduced cost share funds. He would like Indiana to develop a program to assist forest management practices.

² Background paper on enhancing the CFP.

(Exhibit #2)³

Travis Worl, Association of Indiana Counties, distributed his remarks (Exhibit #3) and addressed three issues that he would like the Committee to study:

- 1) A payment in lieu of taxes program to help counties who lose revenue due to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owned property.
- 2) A \$1 county option fee added to all DNR property admission fees to offset the costs of services counties provide to those properties.
- 3) Review the process and criteria used by the State Historical Preservation Office to determine whether a bridge is "historic".

John Molitor, Indiana Historic Landmarks Foundation, presented four areas that he asked the Committee to examine:

- 1) Determine what DNR has done to survey existing historical bridges. He noted that many historic bridges have already been lost.
- 2) Follow-up on DNR's survey of historic cemeteries in the 92 counties.
- 3) Address the underfunded Historic Rehabilitation Income Tax Credit.
- 4) Review the proposal to create a Department of Indiana Heritage.

Steve Rilenge, President, Safari Club International, Central Indiana Chapter, proposed that the Indiana Conservation Officers Youth Camp be expanded. The current camp, which provides outdoor education, can serve only 120 children. Many children cannot attend the camp because of the limited spots available. Kentucky offers a similar camp that attracts several thousand young people annually. He stated that the program needs more funding and a full-time youth service coordinator. (Exhibit #4)⁴

Committee member Rep. Mangus asked that DNR update the Committee on its future land-buying proposals at a future meeting.

The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Committee will be August 30 -31, 2000. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

(These minutes were prepared by Steven R. Wenning, Senior Staff Attorney, Legislative Services Agency)

³ Background paper on a sustainable forestry initiative.

⁴ Letter to the Committee, dated July 24, 2000.